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SIR DOUGLAS MAWSON IN NEW YORK

Sir Douglas Mawson lectured in Aeolian Hall, on Sunday evening, January 17, on the experiences of the Australasian Antarctic Expedition which went to the coast of Wilkes Land under his command in 1911 and returned in 1914. The hall was crowded and the audience showed its hearty appreciation of the unusually excellent moving pictures and other views and of the explorer's lucid explanation of them. The lecture was given under the auspices of the American Geographical Society and the American Museum of Natural History. During the introductory exercises, President Henry F. Osborn of the American Museum of Natural History, Vice-President John Greenough of our Society, Admiral R. E. Peary, President Herbert L. Bridgman of the Department of Geography in the Brooklyn Institute of Arts and Sciences, Dr. Frederic A. Lucas, Dr. E. O. Hovey and several other gentlemen were with the lecturer on the platform.

President Osborn opened the meeting with a few words, in which he referred to the importance of the work done by the Australasian Antarctic Expedition and then introduced Vice-President Greenough.

MR. GREENOUGH'S ADDRESS

"On behalf of the American Geographical Society I desire to express their appreciation of the privilege of uniting with the distinguished President of the Museum of Natural History and with the eminent group of scientists and explorers here present, as also with this representative body of citizens of our metropolis, in extending to our guest of to-night a cordial welcome on this his first public appearance in this city. We have had in the past an opportunity to salute his great predecessors in the field of Antarctic exploration—first Sir Ernest Shackleton, who, so to speak, blazed the trail toward the Pole; next Captain Amundsen, who first achieved its conquest and returned in safety; and then Captain Evans, the second in command under the lamented Captain Scott, whose tragic and heroic end is fresh in our memories—and now finally we greet the lecturer of this evening, whose achievements entitle him in every way to rank with those whom I have enumerated and whose addition to geographical knowledge of the Antarctic is no less valuable and extensive than theirs.

"There is a feature which attaches to all polar exploration which to my mind seems to exalt it beyond all similar endeavor in other fields wherein a possibility or hope for material advantage is present. For whereas the prospect of treasure or commerce or settlement has incited to the opening of other world areas, so, on the other hand, the explorer in the frozen zones of south or north can be animated only by the enthusiasm for conquering danger or difficulty, of competing in honorable distinction of discovery, or of adding to scientific and geographical attainment. Where men are led by motives like these to endure suffering and risk their lives and fortunes I think that honor should be paid them as to an order of supermen and not merely as types of ordinary humanity. The history of Polar research for two centuries is replete with heroic figures of this pattern, divided among almost all the nations so fairly that no one can claim preëminence.

“The field of exploration which is to be described to us to-night is one of especial interest to the people of the United States for the reason that it embraces practically the entire outline of the land covering 60° of longitude which was declared to exist by Lieut. Charles Wilkes of the U. S. Navy in 1840. He was the first navigator to announce the presence of a continent in the southern polar area, and he gave to it the name of Antarctic Continent, and to a portion of its supposed shore the title of Wilkes Land was added by our Government. In his badly equipped vessel the *Vincennes*, of about 800 tons, he sailed along what he presumed to be the coast line of the continent for 1,200 miles, battered by ice and tempests, and he recorded the evidence upon which he based his deductions, the substantial correctness of which has since been established. The whole voyage was most gallant and skilful, as has been generously acknowledged by the lecturer of this evening. It is somewhat singular, and a fact by no means creditable to the enterprise of the Government of the United States, that for sixty years after the announcement by Lieut. Wilkes, no further exploration was attempted, and the distinction of confirming the hypothesis of Wilkes and of solving the whole Antarctic problem was left for other nations. With the opening of the present century a widespread enthusiasm for Antarctic search seemed suddenly to develop abroad, with the result that within a brief period successive expeditions under various flags other than our own had penetrated to the Pole and had determined the general character and extent of the surrounding continent. Thereupon scientific effort turned to more accurate survey and detailed study of the region, and the problems thus indicated are likely to afford ample scope to adventurous spirits for a long time to come.

“The Australasian expedition of 1911-14, under the leader who is to speak to us, has made the most considerable contribution to our information in this regard. He prepared to follow the shore which Wilkes had surmised but could not approach by reason of the vast fields of contiguous ice and recurring fogs and gales.

“Probably nowhere in the world are to be found hurricanes of such intensity and continuity as here prevail; but it is not my intention to attempt to forestall the description which the lecturer will doubtless give of them. I may be permitted to invite your admiration, however, for the wise foresight of his preparation and for the magnificent endurance of suffering on his part and his heroic conflict against dangers which brought a tragic end to two of his companions and from which he escaped only by almost incredible fortitude. Upon these personal features of the conduct of the expedition he naturally cannot dwell, but it is proper that they should be recognized and due honor accorded. It requires some little exercise of the imagination, as we listen in this comfortable room to the quiet and modest gentleman who is to address us, to figure him battling at the ends of the earth against the appalling forces of nature and carrying in his hand not only his own life but that of his companions—and all in pursuit of an ideal—a contribution to the world’s fund of knowledge. This I maintain is a performance that may well arouse our enthusiasm and admiration.

“If the knowledge of his achievement necessarily links itself with the memory of our own countryman who ventured on somewhat similar and adjacent paths, are we not entitled to find satisfaction in the thought that only generous appreciation and friendly rivalry is the result; and may we not cherish the aspiration that the qualities of courage and endurance shown in pursuit of a common end

in the instance before us may be an augury of like concert between our kindred nations in the attainment of worthy purposes wherever occasion may invite us?

"I convey to our visitor the assurance of your welcome and esteem, and I have the honor to introduce to you Sir Douglas Mawson of Adelaide, South Australia."

SIR DOUGLAS MAWSON'S LECTURE

Dr. Mawson's lecture was a popular exposition of his South Polar environment. He did not refer specifically to the scientific results of the expedition. These have already been published and were summarized in the *Bulletin* at considerable length (Jan., 1915, pp. 38-44). His moving and other pictures and what he had to say about them were full of interest and information. Sir Ernest Shackleton has said: "I consider Mawson's pictures the best ever taken." Many audiences in America have seen moving pictures of Antarctica, but none that compared with these either in subject or in clearness and vividness of delineation. All kinds of life and of scenic aspects were shown. Many scenes that Wilkes was the first to describe were there for the inspection of an American audience—the ice-strewn sea margin; the tabular ice crowding off the land to break into the characteristic Antarctic, flat-topped icebergs; the waves dashing into spray against the bergs, or the coastal ice wall, ice caverns, the inland ice cap rising rapidly from the coast to the lofty interior plateau; the animal life, including whales, sea-lions, penguins in most of their varieties, and many other animals.

The bow of the *Aurora*, apparently taken from the vantage point of the bowsprit, was shown rising and sinking in the swell and crunching its way through the ice masses as the vessel made its slow way to the south. The life of the men was depicted in their snow-buried cabin on Adelie Land, an interior that was pleasing in its suggestion of a fair degree of comfort in well-lighted quarters, with books in plenty and space enough for the pursuit of indoor scientific work.

One of the most remarkable series of views illustrated the terrible blizzards that were almost incessant. Hourly velocities of a hundred miles and more were common, and the average wind velocity for a whole year was fifty miles an hour. The scud of the driven snow, well shown in the pictures, and also the attitude of the men making slow headway against the gales, gave a graphic idea of these terrific windstorms. Pictures of men descending steep slopes were shown. They were bending nearly double, in the teeth of the wind, and would certainly have lost their center of gravity if they had not been upheld by the force of the blizzard.

Mawson's talk was almost entirely about his pictures, except when he told the pathetic story of the loss of his two comrades, Ninnis and Mertz, when they undertook their sledge journey across King George V Land; and Mawson staggered home alone, Ninnis entombed in the crevasse into which he had fallen and Mertz dying a hundred miles from camp.

Geographers will hail moving pictures of the quality that Mawson shows as a revelation of the possibilities of such views in geographical education. Nothing could more vividly impress upon the mind of the student what he reads in his text-book than such views as these of the facts of the earth and sea with their varied life and phenomena.

Dr. Mawson will make an extended lecture tour through our country. It is hoped that he will be heard on several other occasions in this city before his return home.